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Issue 30 | August 2009

P3zine

Free Magazine For PlayStation 3 Gamers. *Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...*

EXCLUSIVE HANDS-ON PREVIEW

IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey

PREVIEW!



**Need for
Speed: Shift**

PREVIEW!



Borderlands

PREVIEW!



DIRT 2

**EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW!**



Split/Second

PLUS!



**Guitar
Hero 5**



Welcome to P3Zine



It's been a predictably slow summer month for game releases, so in this P3Zine Preview Special we bring you hands-on playtests of some of the finest yet to come.

To kick off the issue we take to the skies in our five-page preview of IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey, which is shaping up to be quite the high-flyer. We also get to grips with Blur, hit the mudtrack in DiRT 2 and take a mosey at Pandora in 'role-playing shooter' Borderlands.

Looking further ahead, we've got a hands-on playtest of Black Rock's upcoming 'intense action racer' Split/Second, and an exclusive interview with the game's Director Nick Baynes.

MAGAZINE FEEDBACK!
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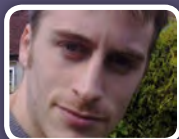
Dan Hutchinson, Editor
p3zine@gamerzines.com

MEET THE TEAM

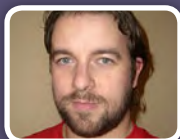
There's nowt they don't know about PlayStation



David Scammell
...is most looking forward to playing Batman Arkham Asylum.



Andy Griffiths
...is limbering up his fingers in anticipation of GH5.



Chris Schilling
...is waiting patiently to burn it up on Split/Second.

DON'T MISS!

This month's highlights...

The latest & greatest titles on PS3



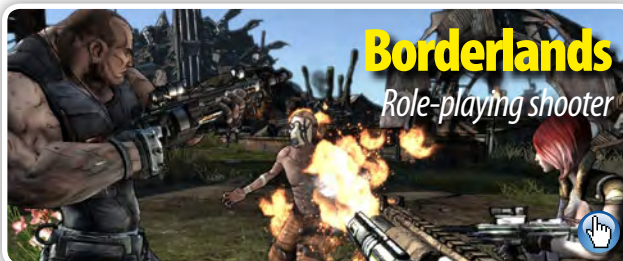
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey

Chocks away!



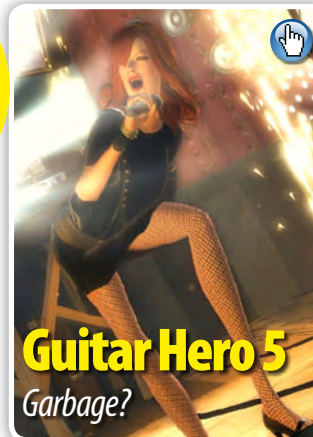
Split/Second

Wheels of fire



Borderlands

Role-playing shooter



Guitar Hero 5

Garbage?

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away

R.U.S.E.	Borderlands
Blur	Colin McRae: DiRT 2
Dragon Age: Origins	Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	Split/Second
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey	Fat Princess
Guitar Hero 5	WipEout HD Fury
Need for Speed: Shift	

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If you are reading this, then you didn't choose "Play" when Adobe Reader asked you about multimedia when you opened the magazine.

Without the multimedia playing, the magazine will look correct, but you will be missing out on all of the extra content built into each issue, like videos, animated screenshots, annotations, quizzes, competitions and more.

We recommend you close and re-open the magazine and select "Play" when asked about the multimedia to enjoy the magazine as intended.

RUSE

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Eugen Systems
Heritage: Act of War:
 Direct Action
Link: <http://ruse.uk.ubi.com>
ETA: Q1 2010



A beach assault, the staple of any WWII title.

"RTSs shouldn't be about who has the fastest fingers, but the best strategy. This mantra sums up R.U.S.E. rather well"



Players will have access to both land- and air-based vehicles, allowing them to mix up their tactics.

R.U.S.E.

FIRST
LOOK

Deception is key in this real-time strategy game

What is it?

An RTS set during World War II, you play as the Allied side which utilises French, British and American forces against the Axis menace of Italians and Germans. Most of the major European war theatres are represented, wrapped in lovely visuals and a revolutionary control system. The story is centred around two Generals, and is less about the horrors of war and more about the explosions and strategy.

Why should we be excited?

Just like Poker, gameplay hinges on bluffs, with power-ups that completely shift power in the battlefield. You can create fake units in order to attract defensive units away from an enemy's base, cast radio silence on them, or even see where enemy Commanders are sending their forces. Real-time strategy games shouldn't be about who has the fastest fingers, they should be about the best strategy. It's a mantra which sums up Ubisoft's latest rather well it's all about deceiving your opponent.

The battlefield is huge but is also very easy to manoeuvre around, with a clever zoom and pan dynamic. Unit size scales as you zoom in and out to make managing multiple units easier. It's a system which has been continually tweaked and is by far the easiest way to move around in any RTS. The zoom function enables multiple fronts to be fought at once and lets you feel like a master of your own domain.

Visually R.U.S.E. is very stylish and strips away the sidebar which clogs up space in other RTS. All building is commanded ➤



**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to
tell us what
you think of
R.U.S.E.

*"Eugen want R.U.S.E. to
appeal to hardcore
strategists and those
who have been scared
away from the genre"*



> R.U.S.E. continued

from a foldaway task bar, so you're left with a screen that concentrates on the on-screen combat and nothing else.

Cut-scenes fade in from the side of your screen in accordance with how you are performing on the battlefield. It's a nice technique which builds up tension as you turn the tide against an enemy General.

When can we expect to see more?

Scheduled for early 2010, R.U.S.E. seems refreshingly original. There's lots of ambition behind this title, and if well implemented, there's no reason why it cannot be one of the best titles in the genre. We're sure to see lots more at the gamescom event in Cologne this August.

Anything else to declare?

Eugen Systems told us that they want R.U.S.E. to appeal to both hardcore strategists and those who have been scared away from the genre. Combat is a lot more fluid than other titles and relies on players' intelligence, rather than their mastery of a DualShock controller.

NEED FOR SPEED™

SHIFT

IN STORES 18.09.09



PLAYBACK OPTIONS: ENHANCED



www.pegi.info

XBOX 360

XBOX LIVE

NEEDFORSPEED.COM



PLAYSTATION 3



PlayStation Portable



PlayStation Network



EA mobile



PC DVD ROM

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BLUR

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Bizarre Creations
Heritage: Project Gotham Racing series
Link: www.blurgame.com
ETA: Autumn

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
 Click here to
 tell us what
 you think of Blur



Shock, Shunt, Barge, Nitro boost or lay mines... each of Blur's five power-ups offer their own unique ability.

"Rather than merely race for pole position, players must also shunt, taunt and destroy the competition using a variety of WipEout-alike power-ups"



We're slightly wary of Bizarre's decision to add a storyline.



Use the Force: The Shunt ability mixes Star Wars with Cars.



Up to 20 players can race simultaneously in the game's online multiplayer modes.

Blur

FIRST
LOOK

Bizarre Creations – Poke Back | Remove

What's the story?

We all spend far too much time on Facebook as it is, but with Bizarre Creation's Blur, the hours spent interacting over social networks looks likely to increase considerably. Described by some as Mario Kart meets Facebook, this arcade racer from the ex-Gotham Racers features a built-in social network that allows players to create their own multiplayer modes and share them instantly with their friends. Cat & Mouse, anyone?

What do we know?

Bizarre Creations made a name for themselves by being one of the best in the business when it comes to realising real-world locations, and so that hasn't changed for Blur, with a variety of areas ranging from LA to Hackney set to feature. And though the style of racing may have changed since PGR – rather than merely race for pole position or battle against the clock, players must also shunt, taunt and destroy the competition using a variety

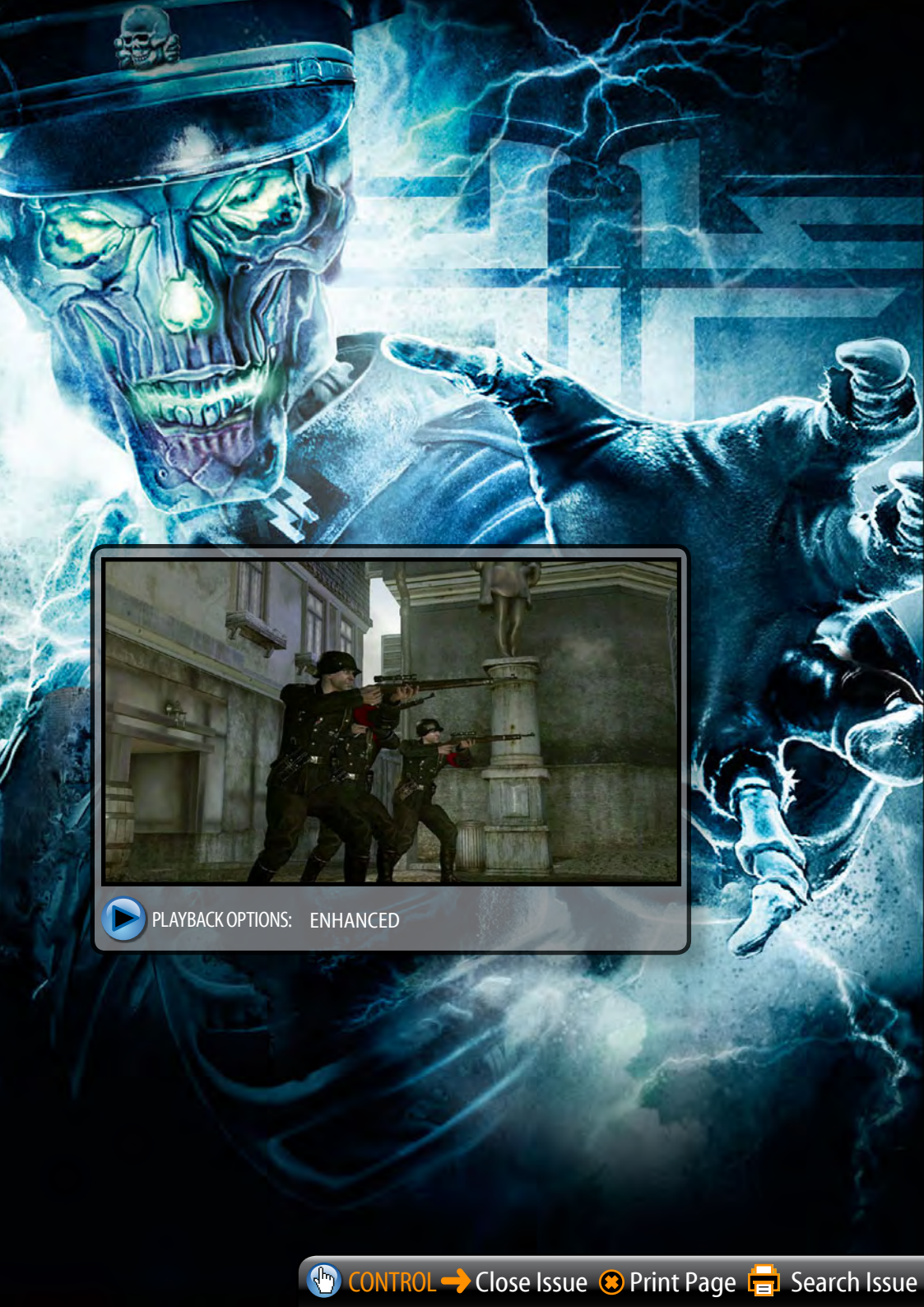
of WipEout-alike power-ups – the impressive handling and physics models of Bizarre's previous titles also promise to return as players take to the track in one of 60 licensed vehicles. PGR's Kudos system has also been given a facelift for Blur, replaced by a mechanic that asks players to earn fans and money by using their power-ups strategically. Use a shield just before an enemy attempts to ram you off the road, for example, and you'll be awarded a healthy bonus.

When do we get more?

Blur's due this autumn, so look out for our review in the next couple of months.

Anything else to declare?

As well as offering their own unique ability, each of the five power-ups can also be upgraded in the in-game shop to make them more powerful using the money earned while racing.



"THE GODFATHER OF FIRST-PERSON
SHOOTERS RETURNS"

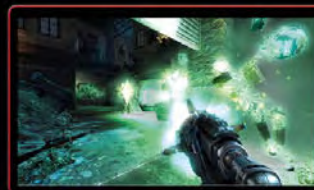
XBOX 360 THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

Wolfenstein™

21ST AUGUST 2009



PLAYBACK OPTIONS: ENHANCED



PLAYSTATION 3



Games for Windows



XBOX 360



ACTIVISION

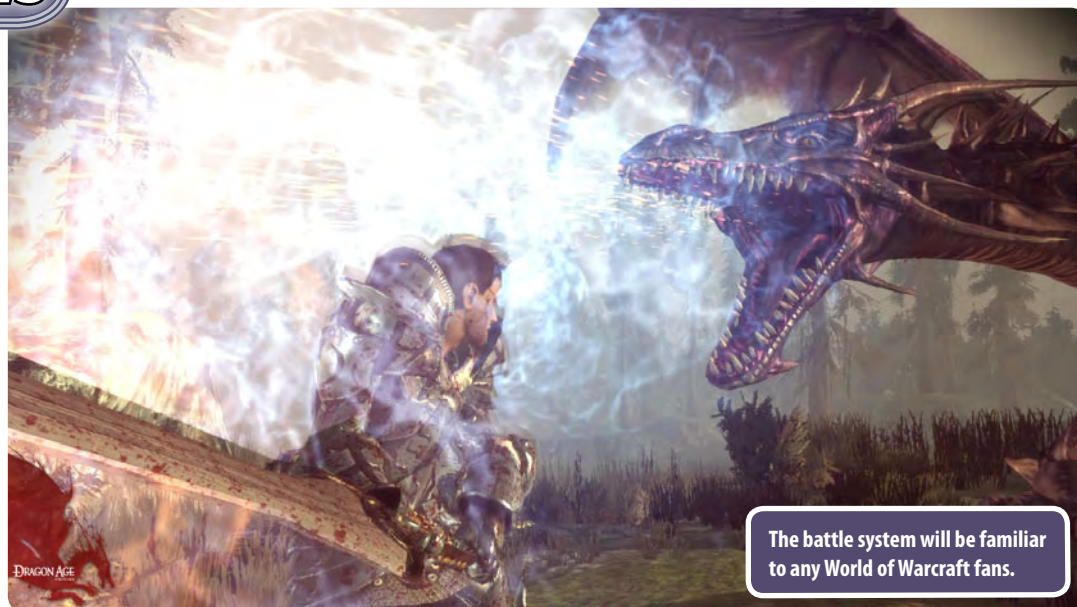
activision.com

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Publisher: EA
Developer: BioWare
Heritage: Mass Effect, Baldur's Gate
Link: <http://dragonage.bioware.com>
ETA: October

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
 Click here to tell us what you think of Dragon Age

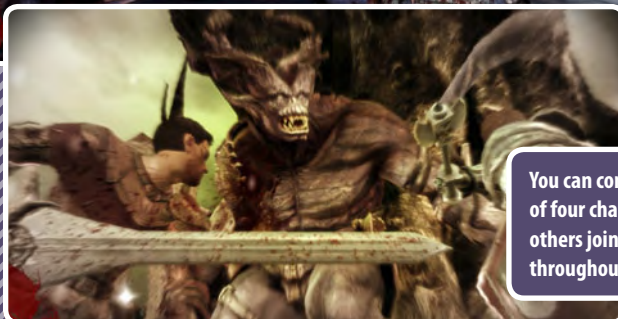


The battle system will be familiar to any World of Warcraft fans.



Enemies can attack your party from all directions.

"There's plenty of blood and foul-breathed Ogres to sink your swords into along the 60-hour adventure"



You can control a party of four characters, with others joining your party throughout the adventure.

Dragon Age: Origins

FIRST LOOK

Dungeons and DualShocks

What's the story?

Mass Effect developers BioWare return to their roots with this 'spiritual successor' to their prestigious Baldur's Gate series. Dragon Age is being touted as a 'dark heroic fantasy', which means there's plenty of blood and foul-breathed Ogres to sink your swords into along the 60-hour adventure. The player can choose to start the game from one of six Origin stories, playing as either a Human Noble, City Elf, Dwarf Commoner, Dwarf Noble, Mage or Dalish Elf, with their actions shaping the way their character is viewed and interacted with by NPCs throughout the journey.

Why should we be excited?

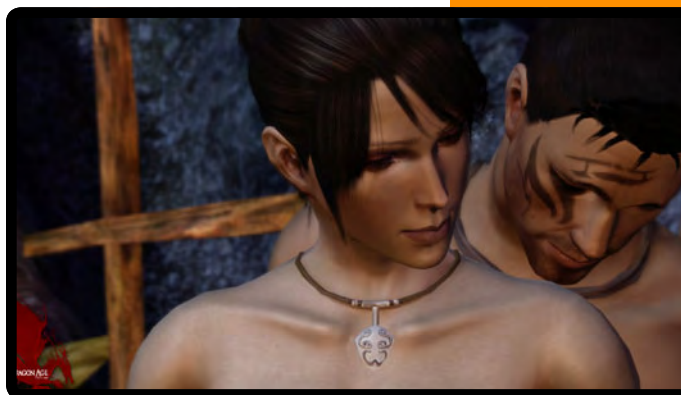
Well, because it's the first real 'hardcore' RPG to have been developed with a console audience in mind. That's not to say that the game has been dumbed down (far from it, in fact) but rather the interface has been built from the ground up to perfectly suit the DualShock 3, rather than the keyboard and mouse setup typically suited to the genre.

When do we get more?

Though BioWare has stated that the chance of a pre-release demo is slim, with the game only two months away, expect to see plenty more in the weeks ahead.

Anything else to declare?

PC gamers are able to create their own items and levels using a recently released toolset. But while this option isn't available to PS3 gamers, BioWare is trying to work out a way of sharing that content on the home consoles.



"ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING TITLES OF 2009"
GAMESMASTER

BATMAN

ARKHAM ASYLUM



PLAYBACK OPTIONS: ENHANCED

28TH AUGUST



PLAYSTATION 3



Games for Windows LIVE



XBOX 360

XBOX LIVE



rocksteady



CONTROL → Close Issue



Print Page



Search Issue



Zoom In



Zoom Out



Toggle Full Screen



Previous Page



Next Page

NINJA GAIDEN

Publisher: Tecmo-Koei
Developer: Team Ninja
Heritage: Ninja Gaiden,
 Dead Or Alive series
Link: <http://www.ninja-gaidengame.com>
ETA: October



Do you think this might be a game aimed at the male audience?

Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2

FIRST LOOK

Kick, punch... remember?

What's the story?

When is a port not a port? When it includes three new playable characters (all 'well-endowed' females, of course), an online co-operative mode, bonus missions and refined gameplay, reckons Tecmo Koei, talking about their sequel to 2007's Sigma and port-of-sorts of 360 'exclusive' Ninja Gaiden II.

Why should we be excited?

Despite being one of the most difficult games going, we've always had a bit of a soft spot for the Ninja Gaiden series – and that's not likely to change for Sigma 2. Listening to the criticism levelled at NGII, Team Ninja are working hard to ensure that Sigma 2 is the definitive Ninja Gaiden experience. This means that the camera is being reworked to allow for a greater view of the playing field, while

each of the three new characters also play slightly differently to one another, with the slow but relatively ranged combat offered by Momiji contrasting with the fast, twitchy movements of Dead or Alive's Ayane.

When do we get more?

A demo of Sigma 2 hits PSN next month, with the game out in October.

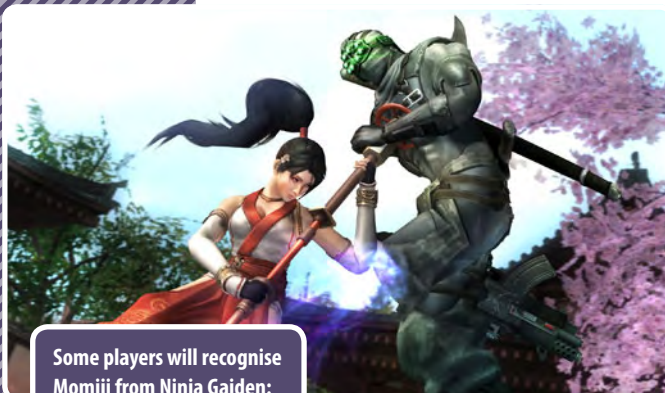
Anything else to declare?

It's not good news for fans of the red stuff; Team Ninja has toned down Sigma 2's level of bloodshed to concentrate on 'cooler elements' – whatever that means.

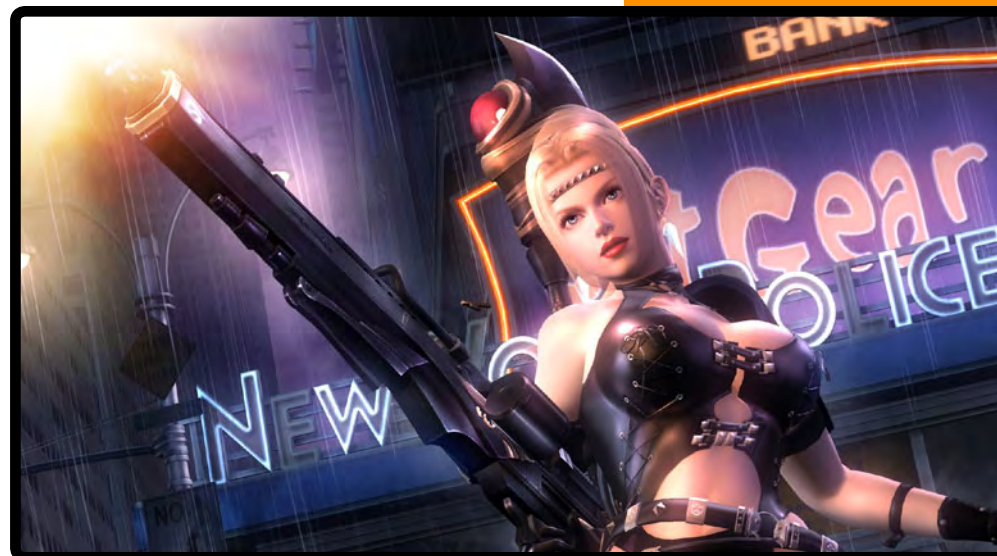
"It's not good news for fans of the red stuff, as Team Ninja has toned down Sigma 2's level of bloodshed to concentrate on 'cooler elements'"



Sigma 2 introduces co-op play to the series.



Some players will recognise Momiji from Ninja Gaiden: Dragon Sword, the series' DS debut.



INCOMING

Another secret six heading your way...



Pro Evolution Soccer 2010

Publisher: Konami | **ETA:** October

After a disastrous few seasons, we thought it was all over for Konami's wilting wonderboy, but against the odds PES is looking likely to score a last-minute comeback with this year's edition. It looks fairly pretty for starters, with its overhauled presentation likely to win back some of the FIFA converts. Meanwhile a new card system replaces the series' previous player star ratings, allowing gamers to turn on unique abilities for particular players, but (for better or worse) the eight-way control setup remains.



Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising

Publisher: Codemasters | **ETA:** 9th October

Ever wanted to join the Marines? You'll probably want to change your mind after witnessing Dragon Rising's punishing one-shot kill gameplay. Of course, it's all about being tactical, and getting the drop on the enemy by sneaking across the island of Skira undetected. And if you see the muzzle flash, it's already too late...

Modern Warfare 2

Publisher: Activision | **ETA:** 10th November

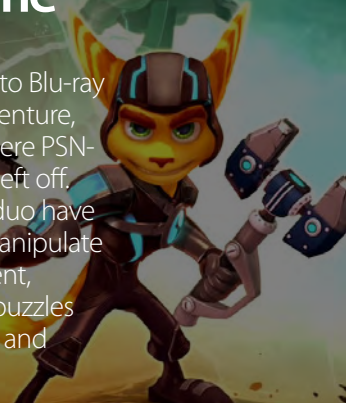
Whether it's carrying the Call of Duty name or not is anyone's guess, but one thing's for sure: you *need* the Prestige Edition. Complete with a steelbook version of the game, not only does Modern Warfare 2's most limited edition come complete with a fancy artbook and token to download the original Call of Duty from PlayStation Network, but also with a pair of fully-functioning night vision goggles. Best collector's edition ever, confirmed.



Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time

Publisher: Sony | **ETA:** Autumn

Ratchet & Clank return to Blu-ray for their third PS3 adventure, which continues from where PSN-only title Quest for Booty left off. As the title suggests, our duo have picked up the ability to manipulate time in this latest instalment, allowing players to solve puzzles by recording their actions and then rewinding time.



Max Payne 3

Publisher: Rockstar Games | **ETA:** Early 2010

Max's delay to 2010 may be a disappointment, but it at least gives him time to tidy up his beard. Now living on the streets of Sao Paulo, Brazil, our hard-boiled cop is looking like a very different chap to the Max of old, switching a suave suit for a John McClane-style filthy vest. Let's just hope that the gameplay itself hasn't had quite such a radical overhaul as its star.



DJ Hero

Publisher: Activision | **ETA:** November

Paul Oakenfold loves it, Jay-Z was a consultant for it and Eminem wants his name on it; DJ Hero is undoubtedly shaking up to be the celebrity-endorsed game of the season. Coming complete with plastic decks, the game's £100+ price point may be off-putting to many, but as Jay-Z himself puts it, money ain't a thang if you want this one.



IN THE PIPELINE

SEPTEMBER

NEED FOR SPEED: SHIFT
 GUITAR HERO 5

OCTOBER

FIFA 10
 UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

NOVEMBER

ASSASSIN'S CREED II
 BAND HERO

DECEMBER

BLUE TOAD MURDER FILES
 JAMES CAMERON'S AVATAR



GUITAR HERO[®] METALLICA[®]

BRACE YOURSELF.[®]

THEY'RE THE GODS OF METAL,
AND YOU'RE JUST A MERE MORTAL.

GOOD LUCK WITH THAT.



PLAYBACK OPTIONS: ENHANCED

Metallica and 21 other guest acts are coming to Guitar Hero.
Metallica.guitarhero.com





HANDSON

**EXCLUSIVE
SCREENS!**

IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey

Gaijin reach for the skies with their console follow-up to the air combat classic

That developers Gaijin Entertainment and 1C Company have chosen to release a sequel to their previously PC-only series exclusively on consoles says a lot about the sad state of affairs that the PC market now finds itself in. But at the same time it's somewhat of a mixed blessing, because consequentially it means that, rather than being

mere ham-fisted ports, the console instalments of this latest (and greatest?) dogfighter have been given the care and attention that they thoroughly deserve. According to publisher 505 Games, unlike the hardcore PC crowd, us console gamers are a bit of a mixed bunch when it comes to our taste for flying games. Some like it rough above the mean and moody >

IL-2 STURMOVIK BIRDS OF PREY

Publisher: 505 Games
Developer: Gaijin
Heritage: X-Blades
Link: www.il2game.com
ETA: September

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
**Click here to
tell us what
you think of
IL-2 Sturmovik:
Birds of Prey**

> IL-2 Sturmovik continued

war-torn skies of Berlin, revelling in the masochistic bliss of having their fighter torn to pieces by a barrage of Nazi bullets, all the while enjoying the surrounding carnage from the cockpit view as they slowly fall out of the sky. These, of course, are the same people that enjoyed the punishment dealt to them by the original IL-2 Sturmovik all those years ago, and if you're one of them, Gaijin certainly hasn't forgotten about you.

Simultaneously, there are those that like their time in the sky a little

*"Some like it rough,
revelling in the
masochistic bliss of
having their fighter
torn to pieces"*

more relaxed, understandably preferring to spend more of their efforts hunting down the Luftwaffe than fighting against the downward drag of their Spitfire's propeller. And again, Gaijin want Birds of Prey to appeal to those folk, too.



Click here to see the enhanced version of this exclusive shot!



Downed planes fall from the sky in a blaze of smoke and fire.

IL-2 STURMOVIK
BIRDS OF PREY

> IL-2 Sturmovik continued

And, of course, there are those that like it somewhere in the middle, being challenging and realistic enough to provide top-tier entertainment, but without having to contend with the intricacies that come with flying a vintage fighter.

As a result, Gaijin has implemented three levels of play into Birds of Prey – Arcade, Realistic and Simulator, each with their own appropriate physics, handling and damage models to appeal to every flyboy going (see 'High Flyer' boxout). Outside of the exhilarating aerial combat, it's this sheer scalability that is most impressive about Birds of Prey. At one end of the scale it's a punishing, fist-clenching dogfight

Dynamic damage rips holes in the plane and affects handling on higher difficulties.



simulator – the Gran Turismo of the skies, if you like. But at the other, it's a game that can be enjoyed by all, whatever their familiarity with wartime fighter planes may be.

So when it comes to accessibility, Gaijin has gotten Birds of Prey spot on, and from what we've played of

"When it comes to accessibility, Gaijin has gotten Birds of Prey spot on"

Click here to see the enhanced version of this exclusive shot!



Towns can become engulfed in flames from downed fighters.

HIGH FLYER

Birds of Prey's flight physics are incredibly detailed, but only if you want them to be...



Arcade



Realistic



Simulator



Arcade

Or 'console mode', as it probably should be called. Birds of Prey's Arcade option is akin to any other console flight combat game you may have encountered, where the deep flight physics of the previous IL-2 titles have been given the elbow for an accessible 'pick up and play' experience.

IL-2 STURMOVIK
BIRDS OF PREY

Click here to see the enhanced version of this exclusive shot!



On simulation mode you'll have to identify friend from foe without a HUD.



> IL-2 Sturmovik continued

the rest of the game, it's hard to find fault elsewhere either. As you've no doubt gathered, *Birds of Prey* is set during the course of WWII, or more particularly six battles that took place over the war's duration, each told from the Allied perspective. Ranging from the cliffs of Dover at the Battle of Britain right through to the flak-filled orange skies of Berlin, each location in *IL-2* has been meticulously recreated using a combination of satellite imagery and 3D modelling, ensuring that every scene looks as close to the real thing

as is feasibly possible. Impressively, the hybrid system does away with the pixellation issues prevalent in previous flight games, making sure that the game looks near photo-realistic, whether you're ferociously battling high above the clouds, or soaring perilously close to the ground.

But when you're not busy admiring the view, you should probably concentrate on thwarting the Axis advance. On the Arcade setting – of which we spent the majority of time playing >

Soak up the view while you still can.



IL-2 STURMOVIK
BIRDS OF PREY

> IL-2 Sturmovik continued

for the purposes of this preview – the combat will feel similar to anyone familiar with Blazing Angels. Your plane's throttle is controlled via the right stick, while holding the L2 button tracks your selected target, swinging the camera around your plane to constantly keep you aware of your enemies' movements.

It's a method you'll have to become familiar with when tackling IL-2's multiplayer component, itself complete with four options for online warfare – Dogfight, Team Battle, Capture Airfields and Strike, the latter seeing you assault and defend either team's ground units. Though our time with the multiplayer thus far has been brief, every game

we've played has been thoroughly enjoyable, fuelled by some intense, genuinely heart-pounding dogfights and spectacularly large maps. A welcome diversion to 2009's FPS-cluttered online world, we think.

An authentic, fun and utterly accessible aerial affair, dust off those goggles, flight fans as Birds of Prey is shaping up to be a must-have for any budding aviators when it launches next month. ●

"An authentic, fun and utterly accessible aerial affair; a must-have for budding aviators"

Roll over screen for annotations



Watch out for that plane! Mid-air collisions have disastrous results.



You'll be tackling missions in a wide variety of locations.

P3Zine

IL-2 STURMOVIK
BIRDS OF PREY

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

95%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

90%

A contender for best flight combat game yet? You betcha



HANDS-ON

Guitar Hero 5

Hey, good lookin', watcha got cookin'? We go hands-on with the facelifted rock and roll star

It's hard to imagine a more appropriate way for Neversoft to introduce Guitar Hero 5's career mode than the way it has. Taking to the stage in a packed New York City venue, our frontman swaggers to the mic as Blur's succinct, yet hugely energetic 'Song 2' erupts from the speakers. Pyrotechnics fizzle across the arena as fireworks rage overhead, and the crowd goes wild

as our act leaps in perfect unison to the modern classic's chorus. It's an unforgettable entrance. Guitar Hero's back, and in a big way, too. Woohoo, indeed.

But to make the occasion even more special, we've cheated. Our frontman is no Izzy Sparks, Axel Steel or any one of Guitar Hero's other fictional characters – or even a custom-created character, >



Publisher: Activision
Developer: Neversoft
Heritage: Guitar Hero
 World Tour
Link: <http://gh5.guitarhero.com>
ETA: September

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
 Click here to tell us what you think of Guitar Hero 5

> Guitar Hero 5 continued

for that matter – it's Johnny Cash in all his glory, fully rendered and brought to life through some uncannily lifelike animation.

We say we've cheated because Cash actually only becomes playable after you've performed alongside him further on in the career mode (as is the case with Garbage's Shirley Manson, Santana and two other as yet unannounced music icons), with his energetic performance of 'Ring of Fire' enough to get even the most impassive fan up onto their

feet. It's an eerily accurate and thoroughly convincing portrayal of the country legend, with Guitar Hero 5's radical graphical overhaul creating an atmosphere and stage presence that the series had always previously struggled to realise.

It's this vastly improved presentation that chiefly sets GH5 >

"GH5's radical graphical overhaul creates an atmosphere that the series had previously struggled to realise"



Click here to see the enhanced version of this screenshot!



> Guitar Hero 5 continued

apart from its predecessors and, to some extent, its competitors, too. The cartoony, wax-like character models of old are out, replaced by much more believable counterparts, rounded off with full lip-synching and appropriate fret movement and finger placement. The enhanced sense of realism extends to the venues too, complete with much improved smoke and lighting effects, as spotlights flicker and stage pyrotechnics go off. It's clear that Neversoft want every one of GH5's performances to feel as close to the real thing as possible, and they've largely succeeded in doing so. Guitar Hero finally evokes the atmosphere and excitement of a real gig, much to the horror, we'd imagine, of EA.

But alongside presentation, seamlessness and immersion also appear to be two words on Neversoft's must-have list. Essentially an in-game jukebox, Guitar Hero 5's Party Play mode allows four players (including online friends) to drop-in/drop-out of any tune at any time. It's a basic addition perhaps, but one that has been



Expect all manner of crazy costumes.

implemented incredibly well, with notecharts subtly sliding across the screen to make way for (or remove) any additional players. Impressively, the mode also negates the need for any menus or loading screens. Guitar Hero's main menu is no longer merely a static screen filled with

"Guitar Hero's menu screen is no longer a static screen, but a performance you can jump straight into"

Click here to see the enhanced version of this screenshot!



Santana's one of five real-world characters to feature in GH5. Can you guess the others?



TOP OF THE POPS

How Guitar Hero is cleaning up its act for the difficult fifth album



A Challenger Appears

Battle of the Bands

Abbey Road

A Challenger Appears

New to Guitar Hero 5 are bonus challenges which task the player with specific objectives to complete while rocking out – for example, maintain a 4x multiplier or hit a certain amount of notes.

Guitar Hero 5

> Guitar Hero 5 continued

a list of options, but an ongoing performance. Press the yellow button on an instrument of choice and you'll be whisked into the gig almost instantly.

Support for multiple instruments of the same type should also remove the need to argue over who gets to play drums (well, as long as your bank balance can stretch that far), while a variety of new competitive multiplayer modes should garner interest from online players bored of standard guitar shred-offs (see 'Top of the Pops').

"A variety of new competitive multiplayer modes should garner interest from online players bored of standard guitar shred-offs"

With a much-needed visual spruce up, an impressive array of songs and a well conceived drop-in/drop-out multiplayer option, Guitar Hero 5's looking to be a more than worthy competitor when it goes up against the veritable kings of rock'n'roll next month. ●



The enhanced lighting really brings home the look and feel of a real gig.



Got multiple drumsets itching to be put to good use? You need Guitar Hero 5.



85 tracks are set to feature, including this year's favourite, Sex on Fire.

P3Zine
Guitar Hero 5

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

90%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

90%

A stunner, a winner, a hot little figure. Guitar Hero's back on top!

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NEED FOR SPEED
SHIFT

Publisher: EA
Developer: Slightly Mad Studios
Heritage: N/A
Link: <http://shift.needforspeed.com>
ETA: 18th September

HANDS-ON

Need for Speed: Shift

EA shifts Need for Speed up a gear

When Need For Speed's radical transformation from chav-alluring arcade racer to serious sim was revealed earlier in the year, the industry stood up and listened. No longer a series shunned by the gaming community, the aptly titled Shift had suddenly – and unexpectedly – found its way onto everybody's radar.

"The previous Need for Speed titles have been, you know... comments Shift's producer Suzy Wallace tellingly.

"There are no clichés, no big elaborate undercover spy plots or anything like that in Shift," she confirms, as the world breathes a heavy sigh of relief. But upon taking the game for a test drive, Shift seems far less the Gran Turismo/Forza MotorSport clone that we had been expecting, and more an arcade-sim similar to the likes of PGR 4.

According to Wallace – a self-confessed Forza fan, no less – there's good reason. "We want Shift to be easy to drive and accessible – that's the key

word. Everyone from a traditional Need for Speed gamer to the more hardcore guys can get in there and play Shift. There are lots of driver aids and difficulties that you can change in the game; stick Shift on Pro mode and turn off all the driver aids and it becomes far more of a challenge."

We felt it best to leave that challenge for another time, sticking the game on Normal as we took

on Brands Hatch. Without even having left the starting grid, the first thing that hits you in Shift is just how striking it looks. Shift is pure eye-candy, with each car's interior modelled to a photo-realistic degree, and complete with fully functioning dials for that extra visual oomph. Indeed, that Shift's interiors surpass GRID's striking cockpit views is high enough praise in itself. The helmet cam's viewpoint, too, seems considerably more open than similar cameras in other racing games, allowing for a much broader view of the road ahead.

And when you do put the pedal to the metal you're blasted with another display of visual trickery, as the helmet cam's convincing physics react realistically to the car's movements – accelerate and you'll be forced back into the seat, brake harshly and you'll

"Each car's interior is modelled to a photo-realistic degree. That they surpass GRID's stunning cockpit views is high enough praise in itself"

Shift's new drift mode in full swing.



Expect an array of vehicle types in Shift.



Shift is filled with subtle graphical touches, like brake discs glowing red hot.



When you can drive sideways without crashing, you know you've got Shift's drift mode mastered.



EA aren't yet prepared to discuss Shift's multiplayer, instead choosing to tease us with the promise of 'exclusive online modes'.

> Need for Speed: Shift continued

be flung forward. An additional blur effect simulates G-force when you reach the higher speeds, blurring out the sides of the screen, while a monochromatic fade kicks in upon smashing into barriers at full pelt.

The racing itself carries an incredible sense of speed – far faster than the relatively snail-paced approach of Gran Turismo – while the vehicle we tried felt suitably weighty, lending itself to a handling model that delivered perfectly on Wallace's promise of accessibility and leading to a fantastic halfway house between the sim-heavy Gran Turismo and the twitchy but enormously fun arcade-esque GRID.

There are still those arcade elements to Shift though, with a points system customary to every race. It's all a part of Shift's unique 'Driver Profile' system, with points earned by performing specific actions on the track, and each helping to shape your overall identity. Overtake a rival, for example, and you'll earn points regardless of whether you do it cleanly or aggressively. Players are encouraged to drive one way or the other, with an on-screen Precision/Aggression bar showing their status for that race; build it up to either end of the scale and you'll temporarily earn twice as many points, which are in turn

"Shift's racing carries an incredible sense of speed – far faster than the snail-paced approach of Gran Turismo"



We think the GT40 may have this one in the bag.

NEED FOR SPEED
SHIFT

> Need for Speed: Shift continued

used to unlock rewards such as bonus cars. Future events are unlocked upon accruing a certain amount of stars, with a set number of stars earned for finishing in third, second or first place, and bonus stars earned for achieving a certain amount of points while racing.

From third to first

But with Shift's strong focus on the first-person 'driver experience', we were initially concerned that much of the game's appeal would be lost on those who prefer to drive from a third-person perspective. Wallace explains: "I don't normally drive in the cockpit view myself, and we appreciate that a lot of people don't either. There's something to appeal in each different camera mode though – the cars are gorgeous, and obviously when you're in the cockpit you don't get to see them. The

head physics are applicable in all the different camera modes as well."

Despite Wallace's assurances, we're still not convinced that driving in the third person perspective offers quite the same thrill as that of the first. Indeed, as Wallace quickly points out, "We'd like to convert people to driving in cockpit view in Shift. Sit close enough to the screen, turn the HUD off and use a wheel and it feels pretty much exactly like the real thing." She would know too, being a keen real-life track racer herself.

It's a sentiment echoed by Formula D Champion Vaughn Gittin Jr. who, according to Wallace, describes Shift's Drift mode as 'the best drift simulation he's ever played'. But while that may be the case, at first glance it also appears to be one of the hardest. Dabbling in a three-round drift event, we're shown



As well as licensed tracks, Shift also features street circuits.



Burning rubber is the key to success while drifting.

> Need for Speed Shift continued

the mode's distinct handling model, with the tremendous oversteer often resulting in us inadvertently pulling donuts or careering into a wall of tires. Indeed, there's a substantial learning curve, and it soon becomes clear that the instant-accessibility rule doesn't quite apply here. Rather than racing for pole position, the focus of Shift's drift events seem to be about score-chasing, with points earned by pulling off long drifts and drifting as close to the chevrons as possible – very much of a similar nature to the drift modes offered by GRID.

Of course, there's no escaping the fact that Shift launches mere weeks before Forza Motorsport 3 and Gran Turismo PSP – and, potentially, Gran Turismo 5 – but encouragingly, Wallace doesn't seem deterred by

the presence of the biggest names in racing. "We feel like we're occupying a very different space [to those titles]. Forza and Gran Turismo are great at what they do with the huge amounts of cars and tracks, but it's very much not what Shift is about. We're trying to cater for a different audience, and I feel that our game puts you in the driver's seat a lot more than titles like those do."

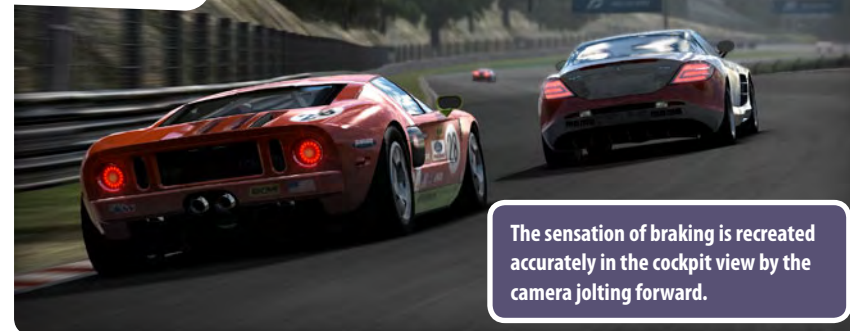
It's one thing to be confident and another to be naive, of course, and we're concerned that Shift may be overshadowed by the racing stalwarts come September. But, however it turns out for Shift at retail, it's clear that Slightly Mad's title is set to offer an invigorating racing experience, and act as a step in the right direction for EA's floundering franchise. ●

Accruing points while racing not only shapes your identity, but also unlocks bonus stars used to progress through the game's career mode.

"This is a step in the right direction for EA's floundering franchise"



In addition to the game's campaign, Shift is also set to feature an individual Time Attack mode.



The sensation of braking is recreated accurately in the cockpit view by the camera jolting forward.

P3Zine
NEED FOR SPEED
SHIFT

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE



FIRST IMPRESSIONS



A welcome change – Shift's heading for pole position

BORDERLANDS

Publisher: 2K Games
Developer: Gearbox
Heritage: Brothers in Arms series, Half-Life: Blue Shift
Link: www.borderlandsthegame.com
ETA: October

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Borderlands

HANDS-ON

EXCLUSIVE SCREENS!

Borderlands

Merging the lines between FPS and RPG

"I'm totally shitting it!" exclaims an anxious Randy Pitchford when asked how he thinks the world will react to his studio's upcoming role-playing shooter this crowded Christmas season. "You don't know how much I've invested in this!" he says, among the nervous laughter.

Of course, the President of Gearbox isn't talking purely from

a financial sense, as Borderlands has been in development at his Texas-based studio for in excess of three years now, undergoing a radical change in art direction along the way – the game's alien world of Pandora transformed from a gritty realism to a colourful, comic book alternative seemingly overnight. But what was wrong with the way it looked before?

"Pandora has been transformed from a gritty realism to a colourful, comic book alternative"

According to Pitchford, the answer is simple. "When you see a car manufacturer design a concept car, they're frickin' awesome, but why don't they ever build the concept car? I know why. Because we were doing the same thing in Borderlands. We had this awesome concept art for inspiration, but the thing you're supposed to give the customer [is different]."



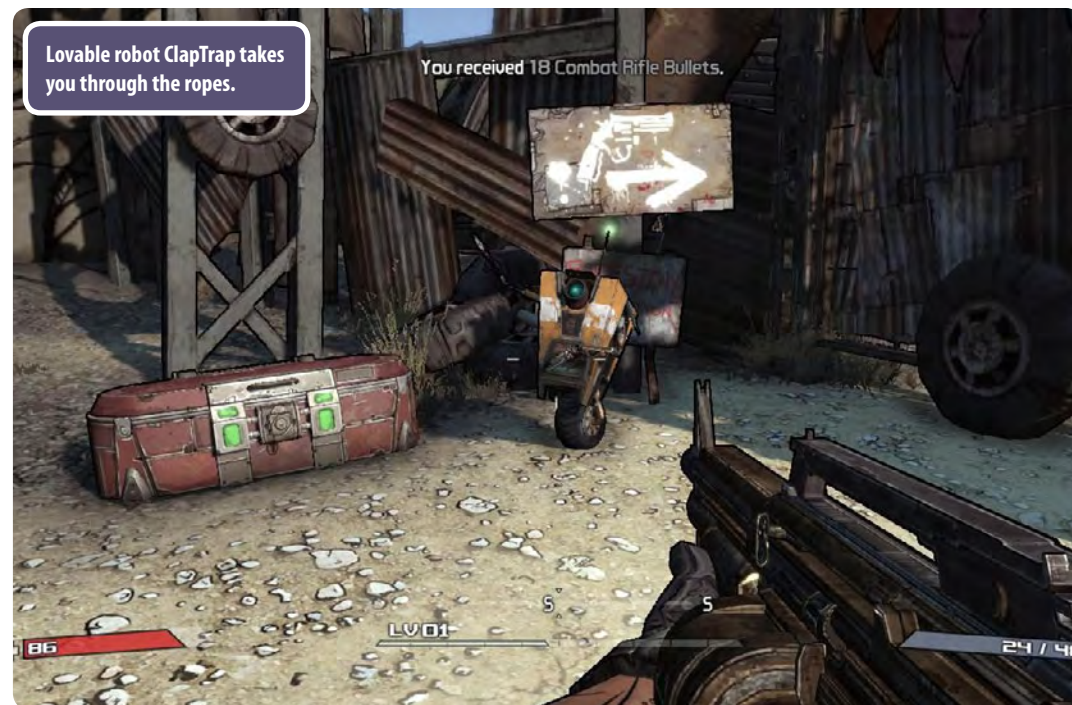
Different members of your party have different abilities. Brick's the strong, silent type.

BORDERLANDS

> **Borderlands** continued

Pitchford wants that to change for Borderlands, though admits that the idea for such a severe transformation wasn't his doing, rather that of an art team left twiddling their thumbs following the game's 12 month delay. "It was a mutiny! Our artists started working with the programmers to figure out a way to render the concept art in real time without me knowing. I got wind that something was going on and I'm thinking to myself 'I'm just going to go in there and shut them the hell down – we're in the middle of production, you guys are crazy!' But then I saw it and I was floored. It knocked me on my ass; I loved it, it was really cool!"

Sitting down with the game for the first time, Pitchford's reflection on Borderlands echo that of our own. The world of Pandora bursts from the screen, teeming with character and vivacity as we're welcomed to Fyrestone, one of the few Old West-style shanty towns that populate the planet. Pandora is what Gearbox refer to as a 'connected world', which translates to a cluster of distinct areas each interconnected via loading screens, similar to that of Fable II. Yet the occasional pause doesn't make the world any less appealing, complete with a day/night cycle controlled by Pandora's two moons. As the Wall-E-like ClapTrap takes us



BORDERLANDS

> Borderlands continued

through the basics, we've introduced to the ECHO device, a menu system complete with tabs for your character's status and inventory, skill tree, mission log and map, and Borderlands' equivalent to Fallout 3's Pip-Boy.

You'll find yourself delving in here most often to allocate your chosen character with new skills. Each new skill requires one 'point', earned upon reaching a new level, with unique skills and abilities available for each of the game's four character classes. Experience can be earned via fairly conventional methods, such as killing enemies and completing quests, while a handy waypoint directs you towards your next objective, whether that's slaughtering a certain number of bandits, securing a particular item or seeing off a boss.

Different beasts

But while there are obvious similarities between Fallout and Borderlands, they're considerably different beasts. Very much the antonym of Bethesda's effort, Borderlands is first and foremost an FPS, but one with role-playing elements thrown on top. True to the nature of a first-person shooter, critical hits are secured by striking an opponent in the head rather than simply via a roll of the die (though RPG-staple hit points still rise above the enemy being targeted), while the focus on dumb fun – Pitchford cites Starship Troopers Director Paul

Verhoeven as a source of inspiration – directly contrasts with the deep, stat-swamped nature of Fallout.

A lot of that entertainment will undoubtedly come from the game's randomly generated weapons – of which millions of combinations are supposedly available – with Pitchford making reference to another player's rocket-launching shotgun, something even he has never seen before. The shooting itself will feel familiar to anyone that's played an FPS before, with the control setup, shield system and floaty jumping almost identical to that of Halo, while a subtle auto-correct tips the hat to Call of Duty. As does a 'Second Wind' option that offers players a list-ditch attempt at dispatching an enemy from the floor when they're down to their last breath 'Last Stand' style. Kill an enemy and you'll be back on your feet, fail and you'll be whisked back to one of the numerous checkpoints littered throughout Pandora.

A fast-paced four-player drop-in/drop-out co-op system further increases Borderlands fun-factor, with the emphasis purely on fast. There are no dialogue trees or unnecessarily deep menus to slow down the visceral action of Borderlands, which is a conscious decision by Gearbox. As Pitchford himself says: "That's not Verhoeven; that's the novel." ●



P3Zine

BORDERLANDS

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE



FIRST IMPRESSIONS



More Halo than Fallout, Borderlands is a shooter with a difference



Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Codemasters
Heritage: Colin McRae
 DiRT, Race Driver GRID
Link: www.dirt2game.com
ETA: September

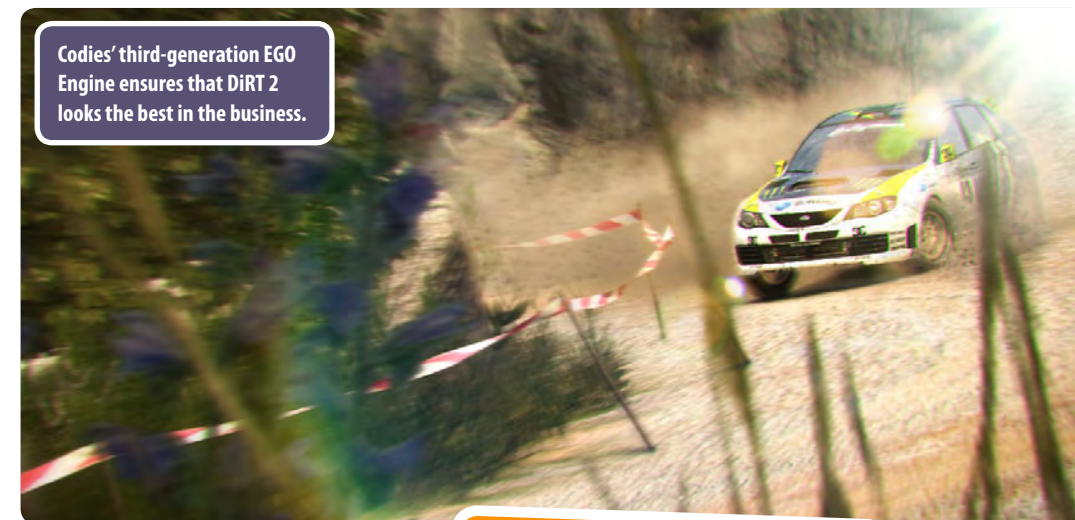
HANDS-ON

Colin McRae DiRT 2

We get our hands dirty with Colin's posthumous racer

In truth, DiRT 2 feels far more like an off-road alternative to last year's GRID than it does a successor to the serious Colin McRae titles of old. That knowledge alone may well be enough to turn off hardened rally fans, but

depending on how you look at it, it's not necessarily such a bad thing. For one, GRID's twitchy 'Marmite' handling – though tweaked here to allow for a more drift-friendly rally experience – is far better suited to a game of this category, and fits in well when



Codies' third-generation EGO Engine ensures that DiRT 2 looks the best in the business.

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
 Click here to
 tell us what
 you think of
 Colin McRae
 DiRT 2



sliding around those dusty South American deserts. And secondly, GRID introduced some well-received mechanics to the racing genre, including the 'turn back time' if you mess up Flashback feature that has unsurprisingly worked its way into DiRT 2. Of course, that means players need to be more cautious than ever when whipping round those mountainous regions, no longer able to simply rely on the Reset Car button ad infinitum to plonk them back on the track.

But before you even get to that stage you'll want to spend time admiring DiRT 2's glorious frontend. DiRT 2 follows the antics of an upcoming rally driver who's looking to fill the boots of the legendary McRae, which means travelling the DiRT Tour in your campervan – itself a fully modelled interactive interface that offers an immersive experience when on the track and off. Unlike in

**"Unlike in the initial
teaser trailer, we're yet
to spot any hot girls
cooking bacon"**

the initial teaser trailer though, we're yet to spot any hot girls cooking bacon. Consider us to be grossly disappointed...

What we have spotted though, is a simple, yet intriguing XP system. Throughout the DiRT Tour you'll have to prove your worth to the legions of licensed Pros featured within the game, done by competing in various events or completing ongoing 'missions', which include challenges like drifting or jumping a certain distance, or spinning your vehicle a certain number of times. Achieve the requirements needed and you'll earn XP, which, just like in any role-playing game, is used to gradually level up the player.





> DiRT 2 continued

As you level up you'll unlock rewards, such as new car liveries or new dashboard items like bobble-head toys to funk up your car's interior, as well as new locations. No longer just Alpine views or dust-ridden regions, DiRT 2's DiRT Tour takes you to Baja, London and even the glitzy streets of Shibuya, Japan. More importantly, levelling up is the key to unlocking events and progressing through the single-player campaign, with particular races locked until you reach a certain level.

From the six events we played, much of DiRT 2's race types seem to be similar to that of the last, including a Rallycross event set in a beautifully realised Battersea power station, and the classic rally action we've come to expect, complete with a 'Trailblazer' alternative for super-fast supercar runs across some sweeping point-to-point tracks. Raid races return pitching players against seven other drivers, while new 'bump and jump' Landrush events feature races set across

"Levelling up is the key to unlocking events and progressing through the single-player campaign"

the game's most rutted tracks. But unfortunately, there was no indication of DiRT 2's rumoured stunt events in the preview build that we got our hands dirty with.

Neither was their much indication as to what DiRT 2's touted social networking feature may entail, though menu screens hidden within the options suggest that you'll be able to form rivalries and relationships with particular drivers over the course of the campaign. Indeed, the notion of a social atmosphere appears to be fairly prevalent within DiRT 2, with rival racers and friendly faces bickering throughout each event.

The increased focus on racing over rally driving may be a cause for concern for the sport's aficionados, but for the rest of us, DiRT 2 is guaranteed to get your heart racing when it drifts into stores this forthcoming September. ●



DiRT's traditional rally events are still our favourites, but there's plenty more here for race fans to sink their teeth into.



From 4x4s to supercars, there's plenty of vehicle variation in DiRT 2.



PERCENTAGE COMPLETE



FIRST IMPRESSIONS



Leaving the rest for dust, DiRT 2's looking great

HANDS-ON

Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2

Marvel vs. (Washington) DC

While it would be easy for us to start by suggesting that Ultimate Alliance 2 will be a *Marvel*, a *Hulking* success, a *Thing* of beauty, or any other comic book-related pun, we'll refrain for the time being. After all, the number of groundbreaking comic book titles that have been released over the years can probably be counted on

the fingers of one hand. However, Vicarious Visions' follow-up to their 2006 Action-RPG may well be another to add to that list.

Ultimate Alliance 2 centres around the Civil War story arc of the comic books, following a sudden attack on New York City that has turned everyone off the idea of superheroes. As a result, the US

Government launches an initiative demanding that all superheroes register themselves as weapons of mass destruction. Some agree to sign up, while others rebel, creating a divide in the superhero camp. Naturally they all turn on each other, and inevitably it's up to you to decide which side of the story you wish to enact.

Holding out for a hero

We got to play through two different levels: one set against the backdrop of a stunning Washington DC sunset, and another entitled 'Prison Transport' which had our motley crew blowing up munition dumps that had been strewn across city roof tops. In both levels we were fighting for the Anti-Registration side, which meant that, as well as fighting off legions of cronies, we also had to contend with the might of the US

Military. Interestingly, Activision inform us that had we been fighting for the Pro-Registration side, we'd have had the military backing our every move.

You can select four different heroes to fight in your squad at any one time, each playable and selectable via different directions on the D-pad. You're also able to switch party members on the fly with one of the 24 that gradually unlock over the course of the game, so if you fancied swapping out Gambit for Hulk, the option (thankfully) is there. At times a fifth non-playable character will also join you for a bit of fisticuffs. For example, following a brief tussle with Deadpool towards the end of the Washington DC level, he fought alongside our party for the remainder of the mission.

Should one of your party fall, you're also able to revive them using

Is Deadpool the coolest of them all?



"You're able to swap party members on the fly"



Though Wolverine's set to make an appearance, how many other X-Men will feature in M:UA 2 is still unknown.

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Vicarious Visions
Heritage: Marvel: Ultimate Alliance, Guitar Hero III (Wii)
Link: www.marvelultimatealliance.marvel.com
ETA: 2010

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
 Click here to tell us what you think of Marvel: Ultimate Alliance 2

> M:UA 2 continued

collected 'revival tokens,' though our brief hands-on period unfortunately didn't give us time to try that particular feature out.

We did get to see Ultimate Alliance 2's new 'Fusion moves' mechanic though, which allows two of your party to join up and pull off an immensely powerful super move. To do this you must first gain enough points by defeating enemies, which gradually fills a star in the corner of the screen. Once it's full you can unleash a Fusion move by pressing R2 and using one of the face buttons to select which character you'd like to join up with. Every character combination has a unique Fusion move too, which means there'll be hundreds on offer in the full game, whether it's Gambit and Thor's super cyclone or Invisible Woman and Hulk's two-fisted rampage.

And as it's an RPG, you'll also be treated to the odd dialogue tree. They're presented similarly to those of Fallout 3, though each of the three conversation options represent a different 'attitude' – either Aggressive, Diplomatic or Defensive. Repeatedly selecting a particular attitude eventually earns an attitude-specific boost – for example, choose to be aggressive and your character will become more powerful; be defensive and they'll earn more health. Though

"Every character, from Gambit and Thor to the Invisible Woman and Hulk, has a unique Fusion move"

relatively simple, it adds an element of strategy and character development to the otherwise basic brawl-fest, ensuring that there's at least a slight element of depth for those looking for something beyond a straightforward comic book beat-'em-up.

How deep the rabbit hole goes though is still unknown, with Activision unable to answer our question over whether a branching mission structure would feature in M:UA 2, though they guaranteed us that the two sides of the story would differ enough for the player to want to play through the game twice. Of course, with so many previous superhero games failing to live up to expectation, some may be asking themselves whether they even want to play it through once. But based on our brief playtime at least, the answer *should* be a resounding yes. ●



Iron Man and Captain America head up either side of the Pro and Anti-Registration camps. Which will you choose?



You'll be phwoaring at Thor's spectacular Fusion moves.

P3Zine
MARVEL
ULTIMATE ALLIANCE 2

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE



FIRST IMPRESSIONS



Fan material at its best, M:UA 2 puts up a great fight



HANDS-ON

Split/Second

Stop the clock! Black Rock heads back to the grid

Even though us PS3 gamers are used to near photo-realistic scenes, it says something when you actually *do* confuse gameplay for FMV, which is exactly what happened to us when we went hands-on with Split/Second earlier in the month. Make no mistake about it, Black Rock's upcoming 'intense action-racer' looks nothing short of spectacular, but then we wouldn't have expected anything less from the Brighton-based developers, whose stunning vistas

sent our collective jaws crashing to the ground in last year's sublime quad bike racer, Pure.

For Split/Second, Black Rock has switched rural bliss for urban chaos, moving away from the dirt track and racing head-first onto the tarmac. The game's all set within the confines of a single city that has been built specifically for contestants to compete in some sort of Death Race-meets-Burnout television show, which has racers dicing with

Fast cars and explosions:
a winning combination.

"You don't just use your car as a weapon, but also the environment around you"



**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to
tell us what
you think of
Split/Second

Your opponents can also use
powerplays against you, which
should keep you on your toes.



death in order to achieve victory and gain world fame. Okay, so the game's premise may be clichéd, but the gameplay itself is anything but. The best way to look at Split/Second is as an explosive alternative to Criterion's Burnout, where you don't just use your car as a weapon, but the environment around you as well. Each one of Split/Second's distinct tracks – of which so far we've seen an airport and a docklands – are built specifically for the player to cause as much devastation as possible via the use of 'Powerplays', specific hotspots dotted around each track that unleash contextual destruction.

Powerplays come in two different flavours (blue and red) with each activated by filling your Powerplay bar (done so by drifting, slipstreaming or grabbing air – a separate scoring system should keep high-score chasers coming

back for more long after the racing is over). Blue Powerplays are the less powerful of the two, usually unleashing just enough destruction to take out a handful of cars. For example, on the airport track we got to race around, we had the option of dropping bombs onto rival racers from helicopters passing overhead or exploding trackside buses. There's also an element of timing rather than 'fire and forget' and you'll want to time your button presses to perfection if you want to maximise destruction. You can't eliminate other drivers from the race altogether though, and although your opponents can activate Powerplays themselves, you can't 'die', and are plonked straight back onto the track following any explosive mishaps.

But it's the red Powerplays that offer the most amount of fun, which not only take out racers in a far more grandiose manner but often



> Split/Second continued

dynamically alter the course as well. Each track has multiple routes, some by way of hidden shortcuts, and others only accessible by activating particular Powerplays. Blowing up a bridge, for example, forces racers down an entirely new section of track, while knocking down hoardings in the airport's terminal will mean you'll have to avoid death from above while negotiating the new-found chicanes. Red Powerplays can have subsequent effects further on in the race, too. For example, knocking down the air traffic control tower not only crushed a large proportion of our rivals, but – in one of the most spectacular instances we've ever seen in a racer – forced a military cargo plane to crash-land on the following lap.

And creating a blockbuster experience is exactly what Black Rock is hoping to achieve with Split/Second, using Jerry Bruckheimer's action-packed Hollywood output

"Knocking down the air traffic control tower not only crushed our rivals, but forced a military cargo plane to crash land on the next lap"

as inspiration. First impressions are hugely promising, and that's even without seeing the game's damage modelling in action – the early build we played hadn't yet had the feature implemented – which Black Rock claim is 'more advanced than any other racer to date', or anything on the game's online multiplayer mode, which the team promise will end up being 'really exciting and innovative'.

What impressed us most about Split/Second though, wasn't just the game's obvious 'wow factor', but how addicted we became to a mere one-track demo. The dynamic courses ensured a different race experience every time, while the scoring system meant that we weren't just focusing on coming in first, but doing so in style – an emotion Black Rock may feel for themselves when Split/Second launches early next year. ●



You'll want to avoid that plane, then...



Despite the screens suggesting otherwise, you won't just be restricted to super cars. Different car classes will be available, too.



P3Zine
Split/Second

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE



FIRST IMPRESSIONS



Make some time for this one, Split/Second's looking stunning

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TIMESPLITTERS

Black Rock talk about their spectacular action racer, Split/Second

There aren't many studios that can claim to have won a 'Best of' E3 award two years on the go, but Bristol-based developer Black Rock Studios is one of them. We had a chat with Game Director Nick Baynes about Split/Second, his team's upcoming title that's guaranteed to get your heart racing.

Split/Second has been labelled as an 'intense action racing game', but what makes it more intense and exciting than any other racing game out there?

It's all about the massive environmental destruction that rips the track apart around you and changes the route as you

race through it. This provides an action-packed experience that's incomparable to any other racing game out there!

Split/Second takes place within a single city specifically built for racers to compete within a primetime TV show. So far we've seen an airport and a docklands, but what other environments can we expect to see?

We've selected our environments based on what gameplay experiences they offer, and inspired by settings in and around cities that are identifiable as classic action movie fare. As we reveal more later in the year you'll find they all offer different look and feels, which while creating a consistent Split/Second experience also have a unique flavour all of their own, too.

Nick Baynes,
Split/Second's
Game Director





Is Split/Second Burnout on steroids? Maybe.

"We have a damage system which is more advanced than any other racer to date. Cars fully deform based on angle and intensity"

> Interview continued

How far does the destruction go? Will the player be able to unleash A-bombs in later races?

We've shown a plane crash landing and giant towers collapsing so far, and in each subsequent environment we dial things up

bigger and bigger. You're going to be blown away when you see the scale of some of the things we're currently putting in the game.

You're placing a huge emphasis on environmental destruction, but how extensive will the damage modelling on the cars themselves be?

We have a damage system which is more advanced than any other racer to date. Cars fully deform based on angle and intensity of collisions; body parts swing, crumple and fall off – you can even rip the entire car in two!

One of Split/Second's greatest features is the ability to dynamically alter the route of the track by triggering certain

Powerplays. How many different routes can players expect to find within a single track?

There are always at least two or three very diverse routes through a track, as well as a large number of smaller short cuts and split routes.

How is the game's progression system structured? Does it play out through a series of individual events like Pure?

The player is progressing through a 24 episode season of the fictional TV show, with each episode consisting of a number of diverse events. The goal is to be crowned the season champ without being eliminated along the way.

What was the thought process behind positioning the HUD dynamically behind the car,

rather than using a more traditional screen-corner layout?

We just didn't want to do a traditional HUD just because 'that's how it's done' By taking a completely fresh look at it we've been able to make sure only the important information is communicated to the player. Also, we have so much going on in the background (and it looks so great!) we didn't want to cover it up with numbers and irrelevant information.

Split/Second is obviously inspired by action-packed summer blockbusters. Will there be any obvious references or in-jokes to particular films within the game?

There won't be anything too obvious but I'm sure that movie fans will recognise where some of our



We've only been privvy to the airport and docklands tracks so far, but many more are set to feature.





Helicopters can be used to drop bombs on other racers.

> Interview continued

inspiration has come from. No one movie or sequence has inspired any of the moments in Split/Second directly but collectively the game has been shaped by our love and repeated viewings of many of the blockbuster driving films from the last 20 years or so.

Have you been inspired by any particular games already at market for Split/Second? Some of the methods used to build up the power bar and the idea of taking out other drivers seems very 'Burnout' to us...

There are a large number of great racing games that have inspired us over the years, and I suspect we'll inspire others in the future too! Ultimately, while there are comparisons with certain elements

of the game with other titles out there, the Split/Second experience feels very different to anything else that's come before.

Can you tell us any more about what you have planned for the game's multiplayer modes?

We have two-player split-screen, and eight-player online gameplay. We'll be revealing more about the multiplayer nearer to release.

Earlier in the year, Black Rock's studio head Tony Beckwith stated that he felt the racing genre was 'dying out'. How do you think Split/Second will reinvigorate the genre?

We're doing something new, and very fresh. Some people who maybe left the genre a while ago will hopefully be tempted back as we're offering something they



Want a tip? Just close your eyes and cross your fingers.

"Innovation in the genre is always relatively subtle – we're doing something much bigger"

won't have played before in a racing game. It sometimes feels like innovation in the genre is always relatively subtle – we think we're doing something much bigger than that.

Have you learnt anything from Pure's critical and commercial reception that you've taken onboard for Split/Second?

We've learned a lot from the development of Pure and the reception it got. Focusing on the features that matter is one of the key mission statements at Black Rock. Listening to the feedback from players and the critics regarding what they liked and didn't like has been an important process for us as well.

Last year, Pure picked up the award for being the best racing game at E3, and Split/Second was awarded the same this year. How does it feel to win the award two years successively?

It's a real honour. We believe we're the first studio to have won it two years running with two different games. Everyone on the team was really energised by the reaction we got, both with the awards and from the press and our peers. It's now down to us to deliver on that promise... and I can assure you we won't let you down! ●



Publisher: Disney

Developer:

Black Rock Studios

Heritage: Pure

Link: www.disney.co.uk/disneyinteractivestudios/blackrockstudio/games/split-second

disneyinteractivestudios/blackrockstudio/games/split-second

split-second

ETA: Q1 2010

PlayStation Network

Download 'em today!

Fat Princess

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Titan Studios
Price: £11.99

It's a well known fact that the monarchy costs us Brits 69 pence per year, and, unlike the cake-gorging royals of Fat Princess, we'd like to think that it was spent more appropriately than on artery-clogging baked goods.

At the heart of it, Fat Princess is a fairly intuitive team-based brawler. Each team must keep their opponent's Princess held captive in their castle – all the while feeding her cake to make her heavier, and thus harder to snatch – while attempting to rescue their own from their adversary's. Imagine Capture the Flag with a royal twist and you're on the right track.

To do so, you are given access to four different character classes that you can change at will, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. It's all

standard stuff – the priest can heal allies, while the warrior is proficient at melee combat, etc. Players can also build cannons and capture outposts to help their rescue attempt. But while there's a fair amount of strategic depth to those looking for it, a large problem lies with the majority of online players choosing to ignore it in favour of multi-man button-bashing brawls. There is a single-player option, though the AI is poor, and to consider it anything more than practice for the online component would be imprudent.

Ultimately, Fat Princess only holds its appeal for so long, and given the relatively high asking price, not as long as it should. And just like the monarchy itself, you can't help but think that it's money that could have been better spent elsewhere. ●



P3Zine Verdict

Quirky and fun, but overpriced

- + An interesting twist on CTF
- Strategy can be lost

76%

WipEout HD Fury

Publisher: SCEE
Developer: Studio Liverpool
Price: £7.99

Taking into consideration the sheer amount of additions and enhancements packed into Fury, labelling it as an expansion pack seems somewhat of an understatement. There are 80 new events for starters (just seven shy of the total amount offered by the original game), backed up by four new reversible tracks (themselves all HD realisations of tracks from PSP instalments Pure and Pulse), 13 new ships and three new game modes.

Eliminator's our favourite, a mode that WipEout purists will instantly recognise from Pulse. Essentially WipEout's very own deathmatch, Eliminator asks racers to switch racing lines for iron sights, with the first person to reach a certain score the winner. It's addictive stuff, and a

mode that works surprisingly well in the WipEout world.

Detonator meanwhile puts a spin on the score-chasing nature of Zone, tasking players with shooting a variety of bombs in quick succession, while Zone Battle offers a new multi-ship alternative to the popular psychedelic race type.

An edgier take on the WipEout formula, Fury's the game HD would have been had Studio Liverpool listened to Slipknot on repeat during the original design process. It's angrier, moodier, and regardless of whether you've exhausted HD or not, an essential upgrade. ●

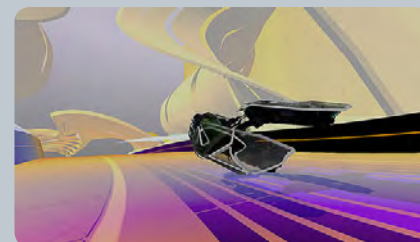


P3Zine Verdict

An essential expansion

- + Fantastic new modes
- Will all be familiar to fans of the PSP games

93%



In **P3Zine** Issue 31

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Reviewed next month!

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